The word also denotes the implements used in curing.

A curing ceremony usually lasted four nights although it was sometimes reduced to two. The rites were the same each night. For the first three nights, the shaman would stop around midnight; on the final night he continued until dawn. The shaman's techniques consisted largely of smoking, singing the songs he had received from his wegeléyu, praying, and finally sucking out the cause of the disease. This might be an insect, a pine nut, a small piece of bone, or some other small object. The shaman's paraphernalia included a rattle, a straight stone pipe, and, for at least one shaman, a bone whistle.

Two shamans were active among the Washo as recently as a few years ago. Today, only one remains alive, and he is an old man. When he dies, shamanism will disappear. Modern Washo medicine is a mixture of shamanism, white medicine, and curing through peyote meetings. Any or all remedies may be tried by a particular patient. The older people are reluctant to go to the government doctor, for they have a fear of being placed in the hospital. They tend to patronize the shaman and the peyote cult in preference to the white doctor. The peyotists, though sincere believers, also recognize the powers of the shaman and the white doctor and readily patronize either of them. The younger people, however, prefer modern medicine; and it is steadily displacing the other two methods of curing.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND LEADERS

Washo political organization was extremely simple. Settlements were minute; Lowie's informants said that they usually had only two to four huts (1939, p. 303). Each settlement was politically independent. Washo informants report the presence of tribal chiefs, but Lowie thinks that this was probably a recent development (1939, p. 303). The chief's sole function was to arrange dances and to make speeches exhorting the Washo to be good and to behave properly. Special headmen led the communal antelope, deer, and rabbit hunts. The antelope chief received his power in dreams; the other two hunting chiefs were secular officers.

The political organization of the modern Washo is more complex. They have adopted a written constitution and they elect a tribal council. Yet this new complexity is largely nominal, for the council exercises little real power and each family does pretty much as it pleases. The chief responsibilities of the council are to manage the small amount of tribal property and to maintain the water supply in Dresslerville, Nevada. Though these are relatively simple matters, the council handles them quite ineptly. Factional fights and personal antagonisms block any really effective council action. The older people, who run the council, seem incapable of dealing with the important problems which face the modern Washo; and the younger people appear to take little interest in council affairs. In short, the Washo have not yet developed an effective political organization.

WARFARE

Warfare seems to have been waged under the leadership of any renowned fighter. The leader collected his

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band by sending a messenger around the country carrying a knotted cord (ha'ló·go). The knots represented the number of days remaining until the persons who wished to take part in the fight were to gather at the place of assembly, and the messenger untied one knot every day so as to keep track of the time that remained. [203] [211]

After the warriors had assembled, they engaged in a war dance which lasted four or eight nights. During this period, they manufactured bows and arrows. The arrows were smeared with rattlesnake poison obtained by letting a rattlesnake strike a piece of deer meat. The war dance was a kind of test and training for warfare. A man demonstrated by vigorous dancing that he was strong and fit to go to war; and the dance itself consisted of sudden, jerking movements as if one were dodging arrows. The war dance resembled the pine-nut dance in that features of both dances imitated the coming activities: in the war dance, men danced with bows and arrows and acted as if they were at war; in the pine-nut dance, people carried their implements for gathering and cooking pine nuts. Several taboos were observed during the period of the war dance: (1) men and women were forbidden sexual intercourse; (2) warriors could not eat meat and salt; (3) pregnant women could not throw their shadows on men engaged in dancing and they could not touch the bows and arrows.

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Shamans who accompanied the war party served two functions: they called on their supernatural power to keep the enemy and his dogs asleep during the assault; and since they were specialists in herbal medicine, they treated the wounded. The shamans also selected the night for the attack. While the Washo were surrounding the enemy camp, the shamans became very intent on their praying so that none of the enemy should awake. The Washo then entered the camp of the enemy, set fire to their huts, and killed them with clubs and arrows as they emerged. Everyone was killed, even small babies.

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When the Washo returned, they had a dance which lasted two or four nights. Lowie reports that men and women danced over the capture of the scalp of the enemy regarded as the best fighter. The scalp was tied to the top of an eight-foot, peeled, willow pole, which everyone except young girls seized and shook. The people finally burned the hair of the scalp and then went home (Lowie, 1939, pp. 329-330). My informants omitted mention of the scalp, but said that an important feature of the dance after the fighting was a ritual bath. This was necessary before the warriors could eat or have intercourse with their wives. The Washo apparently were militarily superior to the Miwok and the Maidu on the west, but they found the more numerous Paiute on their eastern border more formidable opponents. The fact that the Paiute obtained horses earlier than the Washo would also have given the Paiute some superiority in warfare.

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SUMMARY

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Aboriginal Washo culture may be thought of as a blend of Californian and Great Basin cultural traits. Heizer and Elsasser (1953, p. 4) note the following ties with California:

> . . . the conical dwelling made by piling up bark slabs; semi-subterranean assembly house; "community" or bedrock mortar; emphasis on coiled

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20

N W 159 755 795* 797 N W [209]

dians' previous knowledge of peyote was contradictory: some heard that all who used peyote with Leo Okio had died; others remembered Tom Knudsen's statement that peyote cured. One Indian convert continued to be interpreter for the Baptist missionary, and Johnny Cleveland, Indian judge, urged attendance at the mission. In spite of belief in the miraculous power of peyote, kept alive by testimonials, only about a dozen meetings were held at Schurz; and only Mary D. Creek of the twenty or twenty-five who were active for about three months attended meetings after February, 1937.

Through their grapevine news system nearly all the Washo and Northern Paiute Indians soon heard of Ben Lancaster's medicine and meetings. Ben asked Sam to arrange meetings with his friends; and since Willie Smokey (W,2), his "cousin," was sick, a meeting was held for him on November 26, 1936, at the Dresslerville Indian Colony, a mile from Gardnerville. After a few meetings in Smokey's house, the crowds were so large that a canvas was put up in a circle, and meetings were conducted in the open in spite of freezing temperatures.

Everyone was invited and from seventy to a hundred persons attended. Probably his success prompted Ben to change the charitable manner used at Schurz, for now he preached the necessity of voluntary contributions of money. Though telling the Indians to give whatever they wished, Ben exaggerated the expense entailed in procuring peyote and the greater blessings received through larger contributions. The $4.00 to $5.00 received for a meeting at Schurz became $50 to $80. No doubt the Gardnerville Washo primarily came to the meetings to be cured of real or supposed ills. Those who were well learned that peyote would protect them and show them the right way to live. The entering wedge was through kinship and friendship, and usually when one member of a family joined, the rest followed.

Willie Smokey, councilman and leader in the Baptist mission, was respected for his sobriety and intelligence by Indians and whites. His family—wife, mother, three married children, and five unmarried, adult children—formed the nucleus of the Gardnerville cult, which was active until December, 1937. During that time, the Smokeys gave Ben baskets; beadwork; special foods, such as piñon-nut flour; many dinners; and all the money they could, which was a fair amount because all were working. They became so earnest that they never missed a meeting wherever held, as a result endangering their employment by tardiness or absence. Like Sam Dick, they seem to have been converted religiously, and in conversations after their separation from the cult they emphasized its spiritual and ethical qualities much more than its medicinal efficacy. They maintained that since Ben failed to correct certain unjust and irreligious acts of Sam Dick they could not attend meetings. (It was apparent, however, that jealousy and thwarted ambition were the real reasons.)

At Gardnerville, Ben Lancaster's peyotism flourished and declined much as had Lone Bear's cult four years earlier. By November, 1938, only one family of four active peyotists remained there;[20] and since June, 1938, Ben has refused their request for meetings because of the militant opposition.

After instituting meetings near Gardnerville, Ben and his wife traveled to and from meetings there and at Schurz, about sixty miles away. The road passes through Wellington in Smith Valley and Yerington in Mason Valley, where about two hundred Indians live in two colonies and on scattered ranches. Most of the older Indians remembered Ben; and although they are Northern Paiute, several traced distant kinship with him. At Wellington, Ben told James Keno (P,3), his "cousin-

[20] Two other active members are listed on Dresslerville census rolls, but they live elsewhere.